



APRIL 1, 2023 - MARCH 31, 2024

ANNUAL REPORT

Our Mission

The mission of Living Systems is to contribute to the knowledge of human behavior from a natural systems perspective and to offer that knowledge through the provision of counselling, training and education to interested members of the community.

Living Systems is a registered society supported by our generous individual donors, members and the following organizations:



NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As the President of the Board of Living Systems Society, it is my pleasure to recognize our collective achievements and progress throughout the year.

As you've heard here tonight, the Society has seen advancements in its programs, which have benefit many individuals and families in the communities we operate in. It's been through the diligent efforts of Katie White, our Executive Director and Leila Howard, our Director of Business and Finance and others that have sought to fulfill the vision and mission of the society.

I want to acknowledge my appreciation of Katie's efforts as she has been instrumental in developing the ongoing Strategic Plan. Under her steadfast leadership we have seen advancements and increased stability in our core programs. She's also strengthened our relationship with other centres within the Bowen Network and has become the new face of Living Systems within that network. She's traveled to Australia to The Family Systems Institute and the recent International Conference of Bowen Theory in Florida. As well, she's participated in the Network Program with the Bowen Center.

Leila's oversight of our business operations has been crucial to the Society's success and has been instrumental in ensuring our financial health. Financially, we've had a robust year. Once again we've received a significant grant from the BC Gaming Commission and thank them. We've received grants from the City and District of North Vancouver and various donations. Thanks to Leila's planning and fiscal management this has ensured that each initiative is well-supported and poised for success. The budget presented I believe is our largest to date in 53 years. We also acknowledge Peet Nienaber's contributions as our accountant over many of those years.

Maybo Lui's creative social media efforts have helped to increase our visibility to other professionals and the community at large. And Dave Galloway's blog postings have been well received. These efforts serve to bring Bowen Theory to the community. Dave has also put extensive time into updating and organizing our virtual library for those within our training program and clinicians to access more easily.

The Conference Committee has been active and we're pleased to announce that Living Systems will be hosting the International Conference in Vancouver in 2027. These, along with the various groups the organization has been running, benefit the community and provide opportunities for our faculty to present their knowledge of Bowen Theory.

I want to acknowledge the dedication of Erica Guliker and Ariel Creighton who have been unwavering in their support of Living Systems. As well I want to acknowledge Dan DeBeyer who resigned this year. His support of Katie through the Strategic Planning process was much appreciated. But we are excited to add new Board Members with some additional people considering joining our Board in the near future. We, as a Board, have continued to lead Living Systems Society with a steadfast commitment to its mission and vision.

In conclusion, Living Systems Society stands on a solid foundation of dedicated leadership, innovative programs, and strong financial health. As we look to the future, we are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and are committed to continuing our work towards a sustainable and thriving society.



NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In February of this year, I gave a presentation at the Bowen Theory International Conference. In it I shared a quote Dr. Bowen wrote discussing his leadership (1990), “if I can discover and correct the part I play, all others will automatically correct their parts...It creates a situation in which the emphasis is on Individual Responsibility.” One thing I appreciate about working in an organization which has differentiation as a cornerstone is the emphasis on personal responsibility. The part I take into my leadership is allowing others the space to grow. I am surrounded at Living Systems by individuals who are thoughtful, creative, and curious. I have enjoyed watching others take steps towards their own questions in theory.

Living Systems, like any system, continues to develop and change. It saw the launch of two new programs, the Clinical Internship Year 2 which was led by me and Dave Galloway, and the Continuing Studies Program which was led by Pamela Richmond and Dave. Both programs grew out of faculty interest in taking on a program they owned. This year also brought a new conference looking at science and Bowen theory; where our newest faculty, Dixie Vandersluys, presented. Six of our faculty, trainees or former trainees presented at the Bowen Center and wider Network Conferences around the world. Educational programs have also been successful. Leila Howard has continued to run her Family of Origin group. Sharon Salomons heads our ministry programs and ran “Using Family Systems in Ministry” twice last year.

Our clinical program continues to serve the needs of the community, although our client numbers were down a bit from the past two years. We currently have 9 contractors and associate contractors, as well as 26 interns and residents, most of whom are seeing clients. We work both virtually and out of 4 offices to serve hundreds of individuals and families. The leadership continues to think about how to better connect with the community and share the resources we can provide. Specifically connecting with additional referral sources who may not be aware of what we offer.

Supporting our educational and training program, Dave Galloway has been transitioning our paper and video library to digital formats to be used in our training programs. It includes the Family Systems Journal, the Family Systems Forum, FS Journal and 400 GB of video material. This year Dave and a couple others have added another 24 Blog posts to our website which have had approximately 4500 views.

Our mission is to make knowledge of human behavior from a natural systems perspective available to the community by providing counselling, training, education, and research. This letter helps me reflect on how our work this year shows our mission is truly in practice, it also provides me with the opportunity to thank the numerous people who contribute to the success of this mission. As there are too many to acknowledge individually, I want to take this opportunity to thank all who contribute through teaching, supervising, learning, funding, listening, and challenging us to take on new things. I will specifically mention Mark Smith and the board for their support, as well as Leila Howard, who wears various hats at Living Systems and is integral in our success. I appreciate all of you who have taken on new roles in teaching and supervision this year and keep coming forward with new ideas. This coming year will include further development of new programming, a podcast (!) and the start of the work of hosting the next Bowen Theory International Conference in 2027! Exciting things are ahead, please reach out to me if you wish to join any of these endeavours.

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if I can discover and correct the part I play, all others will automatically correct their parts...It creates a situation in which the emphasis is on Individual Responsibility.

~ Murray Bowen





BETWEEN APRIL 1, 2023 - MARCH 31, 2024:

330

CLIENTS WERE SERVED IN-PERSON & ONLINE

2475

SESSIONS WERE CONDUCTED

10+

CITIES WHERE CLIENTS LIVE

26

INTERNS AND RESIDENTS WERE TRAINED

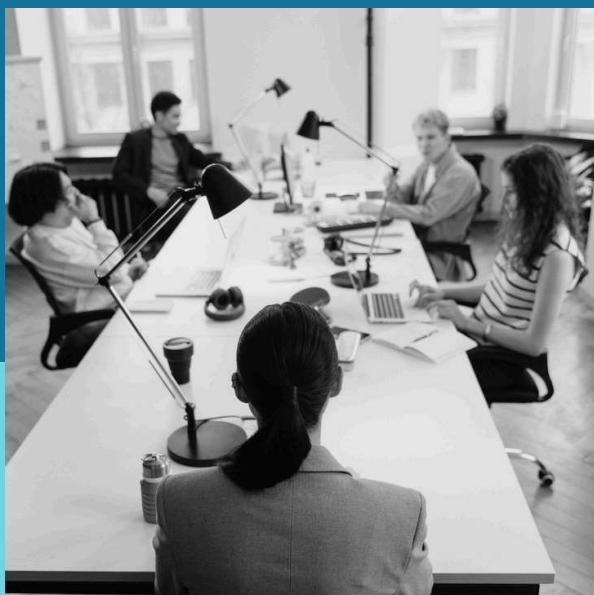
In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, with contractors, interns, residents and volunteers across multiple locations, Living Systems supported hundreds



Living Systems works with individuals, couples, and families to address a wide variety of concerns such as:

- Depression, Anxiety, and Stress
- Marital issues, separation, divorce, parenting, or relationship problems
- Addictions
- Low self-esteem, assertiveness, anger, communication or career issues
- Grief, aging or health issues
- Spiritual or religious concerns

Living Systems uses a sliding fee scale to provide affordable counselling based on a client's gross income, number of dependents, and current circumstances.



TRAINING & EDUCATION

Living Systems provides various programs to professionals and the public to educate individuals on the concepts and application of Bowen family systems theory. Living Systems also hosts an annual conference to bring leading researchers from various disciplines to Vancouver to explore Bowen family systems theory and other fields of study.

TRAINING PROGRAMS

CLINICAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

This program is designed to provide a thorough introduction to Bowen family systems theory and therapy and contributes to students becoming competent relationship, family, and clinical counsellors, school counsellors, pastoral counsellors and social workers.

ADVANCED STUDIES PROGRAM

The Advanced Studies program deepens the understanding of Bowen Theory and allows participants to gain further clarity in defining the concepts of Bowen Theory and their practical application.

POST GRADUATE PROGRAM (NON-PRACTICUM OPTION)

This program is new for 2023-2024 and is designed to provide a thorough introduction to Bowen family systems theory and therapy and enables students to learn how to apply the theory to their own lives and, if applicable, with individuals, couples and families in their private practice or work setting, without including a practicum.

CONTINUING STUDIES PROGRAM

The program is new for 2023-2024 and provides advanced students of Bowen Theory opportunities to explore different areas of Bowen Theory each year to further their understanding and application of the theory.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS



REACTIVITY & RELATIONSHIPS: WIDENING THE LENS WITH BOWEN THEORY & POLYVAGAL THEORY CONFERENCE

Speakers: Victoria Harrison,
Dr. Stephen Porges, Dixie
Vandersluys

This was an online conference held in April 2024 that aimed to increase one's understanding of how people function in relationships from the perspectives of Bowen theory and Polyvagal theory.

USING BOWEN FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY IN MINISTRY Instructor: Sharon Salomons

This course introduces clergy and faith leaders to the concepts of Bowen Family Systems Theory to begin thinking about their own role and function within their family as well as their role within their faith communities.



FAMILY OF ORIGIN WORKSHOP Instructor: Leila Howard

This introductory family of origin workshop is for people motivated to develop and use their family diagram as part of the process of differentiation of self.





CONTINUING STUDIES PROGRAM

The 2023-24 was the first year that the Continuing Studies Program was offered. The group, 2 facilitators and 3 students, met twice a month to discuss books, articles, videos centering around the theme of the family as an emotional unit. In the first term this theme was explored through the lens of cut-off and in the second term we considered the family as an emotional unit in the context of trauma. The topics of cut off and trauma were introduced through the use of texts outside the Bowen cannon, and allowed for rich engagement between popular authors and Bowen theory scholarship.

For the 2024-25 year, the broad theme will be development: a consideration of the process of human maturation. During the year we will use literature from inside and outside of Bowen theory comparatively in order to think critically about what Bowen theory brings to discourses of development.

PAMELA RICHMOND,&
DAVID GALLOWAY

PROGRAM FACILITATORS



FAMILY SYSTEMS IN MINISTRY

In the last year, Living Systems has run the “Using Family Systems in Ministry” twice, - once in the late spring of 2023 and again in early 2024. The course includes 6 two-hour sessions offered weekly on zoom. Participants have included ordained ministers and lay leaders from a variety of faith communities including Presbyterian, United Church of Canada, Anglican and Mennonite and from as far away as Wisconsin.

It is fascinating to see people begin to understand the basics of Bowen Family Systems Theory and see how it applies to the emotional process of their congregations. As with many aspects of our society, faith communities are undergoing incredible changes which can contribute to increased anxiety. I first began learning about Bowen theory when I was first ordained and working in a congregation. I have appreciated being a part of this program and being able to offer now to others what I have learned and found so valuable.





Apr 17, 2024
**Conference Reactivity
& Relationships:**

Widening the Lens with Bowen
Theory and Polyvagal Theory

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On April 17, 2024 Living Systems hosted an online conference entitled “Reactivity and Relationships: Widening the Lens with Bowen Theory and Polyvagal Theory”. Victoria Harrison of CSNSF Houston was the main speaker and presented both theoretical and clinical applications of her decades of research on physiology in the family. Dixie Vandersluys, a third year trainee and new member of Living Systems’ faculty, presented a short paper on a tracking tool of autonomic and relationship pattern awareness. Ms. Vandersluys also interviewed Dr. Stephen Porges, founder of Polyvagal theory, on the science of the vagus nerve and its impact on relationships, followed by Dr. Porges engaging with audience questions. The day ended with a panel discussion between Victoria Harrison, Lois Walker, and Dixie Vandersluys.

86 people (including a few organizations that purchased group recordings) registered for the conference, with over 60 people attending online on the day. 90-day access to the conference recording was sent to all who registered. The interview with Dr. Porges will be sent to the Polyvagal Institute website to be shared with their online community, including information on the conference and Living Systems organization.

Feedback on the conference from participant surveys was overwhelmingly positive, especially the organization of the day and the useful balance of theory and clinical application. The conference made a profit of \$5,500, one of Living Systems’ most lucrative conferences to date, possibly due to the inclusion of the conference recording for all.

Dixie Vandersluys took over the role of chair of the conference committee this past year and has greatly appreciated the guidance of Katie White in taking on this role and being the contact person for all of the presenters. Thanks to all of the conference committee for their time, energy, and ideas, especially Leila who took care of admin, Maybo’s eye-catching advertising, Dave handling technology on the day, and Katie who moderated the conference and kept us on time.

The conference committee is already in contact with potential speakers for the next conference and is considering going back to hosting two conferences: one smaller online workshop and a semi-annual larger hybrid conference.

Living Systems will also be hosting the Bowen International Conference in 2027 and will be creating another planning committee for that conference. We are looking for volunteers!



Thank you to the dedicated and talented members of our Board of Directors and Faculty Members as well as our wonderful team of Interns, Residents and Contracted Counsellors.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Mark Smith, MSW RSW, Board President
- Erica Guliker, MA, LMC, Member at Large
- Dan DeBeyer, Bsc, MBC, Member at Large
- Ariel Creighton, Secretary/Acting Treasurer
- Robert Croezen, MSW, Member at Large
- Mary Hardinge, BAPsych, BEd and MEd, Member at Large

FACULTY MEMBERS

- Lois Walker, M.Div, RCC
- Katherine White MSc, RMFT, RCC
- Leila Howard HRMD, MA, RCC
- Devana Weiss, MA, RCC
- Lori-Anne Boutin-Crawford, MDiv, RCC
- Sharon Salomons M. Div, RCC
- David Galloway, Diploma, FEA
- Pamela Richmond, MSW, RSW
- Sarah Ruggier, MA, RCC
- Maybo Lui, MS, RCC
- Dixie Vandersluys, MA, CCC

CLINICAL COUNSELLORS

- Lois Walker M.Div RCC
- Devana Weiss, MA, RCC
- Leila Howard, HRMD, MA, RCC
- Katherine White, MSc, RMFT, RCC

ASSOCIATE CLINICAL COUNSELLORS

- Catriona Remocker, MPH, RCC
- Maybo Lui, MS, RCC
- Pamela Richmond, MSW, RSW
- Sarah Ruggier, MA, RCC
- Lori-Anne Boutin-Crawford, MDiv, RCC
- Jennifer Hassard, MSW, MSc, MBA

RESIDENTS & INTERNS

- Jude Barnes, B.Sc, J.D.
- Dave Galloway, FEA
- Deborah DeJong, BA, BEd
- Corrie Howard, BScN
- Peter Yawney, BA
- Mimi Ting-Yen Yang, M.Ed
- Silvia Talamonti
- Denise Kwan, MSW, RSW
- Dixie Vandersluys, MA, CCC
- Deanna Bergen, BSW
- Sharon Elia, BA, BEd
- Marlene Stobbe
- Isabella Nielsen, BBA
- Iryna Pauliukova, MACP
- Adrienne Brown, PMP, B.A
- Suzanne Ashley, MDiv
- Rebecca Van Der Hijde, MA, BCBA
- Sherri Waldman, MSW
- Juliana Garcia de Camargo, MA
- Pietro Pallotta, MA Candidate
- Elena Latushkina, PhD, PCC, COC
- Solveig Pedersen, MA Candidate
- Roberta Brandi Pfrimer, MA
- Pablo Godoy, M.Sc
- Tahmasebi, Amirali, B.Tech

NOTE FROM THE BUSINESS & FINANCE DIRECTOR

I can report that Living Systems had an approximate net profit of \$2,500 for our March 31st, 2024 year-end financials thanks to full attendance in all our programs and funding from the BC Gaming Commission, grants and donors. We are incredibly thankful for the financial support we received from our donors, the BC Gaming Commission, the District of North Vancouver, City of North Vancouver, and the Vancouver Foundation.

The March 31, 2024 Year End Financials Statements will be presented at the AGM on May 30, 2024 along with the Society's Budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. We are optimistic for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. We are focused on providing high quality programs and services to the community. We are in a positive financial position to continue to develop and expand our programs in an effort to extend the reach of our services to more people in the community and beyond.

I would like to thank Katie White for her leadership, clarity, and vision for the organization. My thanks to the faculty for their valuable contributions and to the students for whom we would not be able to offer our lower fee counselling service without them. Thank you to Mark Smith and the Board for their support, oversight, and dedication to this organization.



LEILA HOWARD

BUSINESS AND FINANCE DIRECTOR

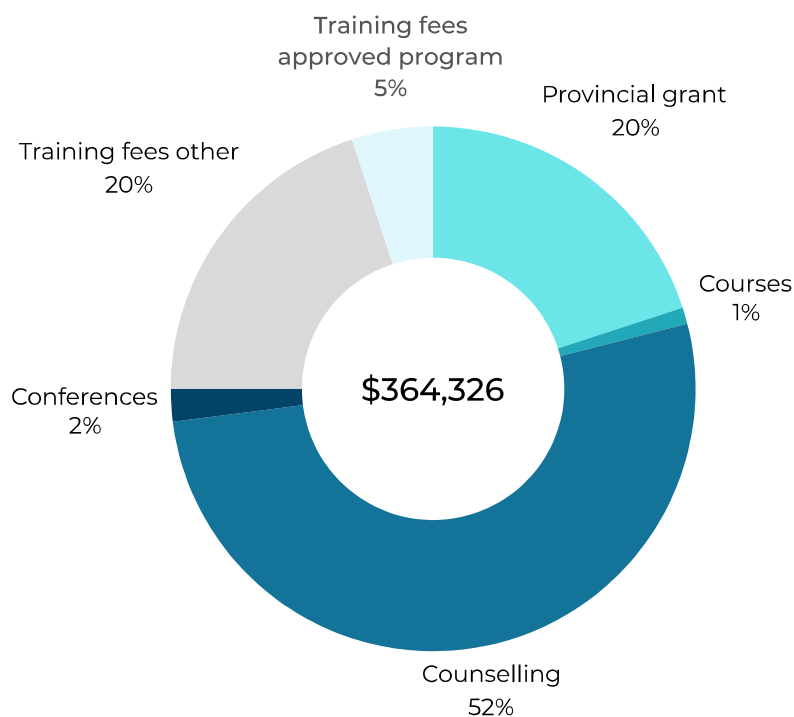


This fiscal year I have enjoyed the opportunity of representing Bowen theory as a clinical supervisor and instructor for the first-year training program. I have learned that teaching and supervising has provided a rich opportunity to work on differentiation of self. I have also appreciated that using systems thinking to view relationship systems in a more realistic way can provide a greater sense of control over oneself, less perceived threat, and more emotional calmness.

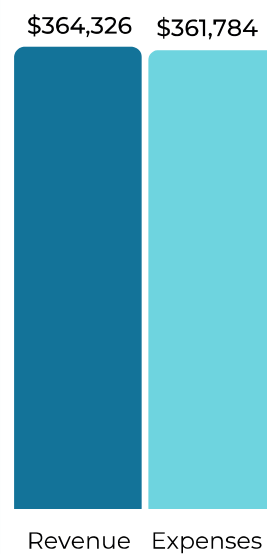
2023-2024 FINANCIALS

YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2024

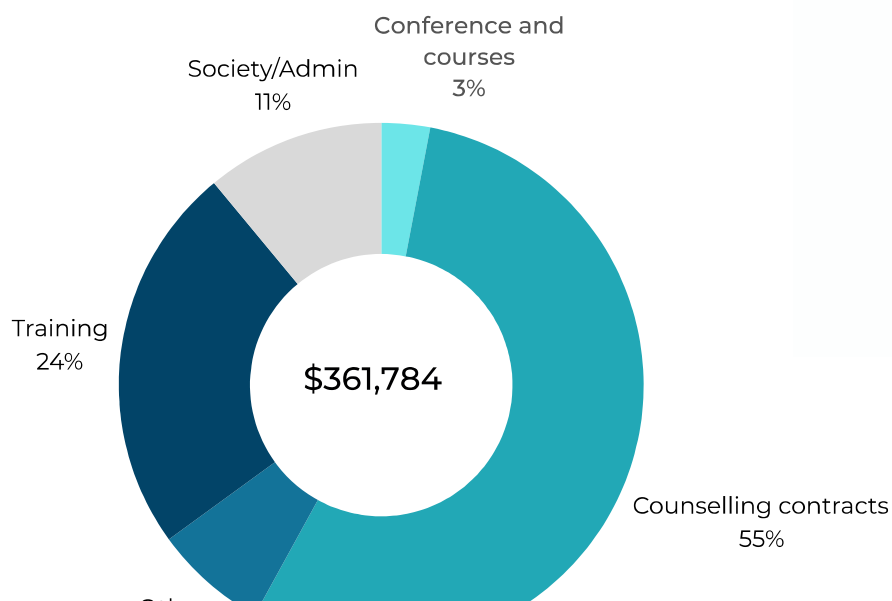
Total Revenue: \$364,326



This year, Living Systems had a net profit of \$2,542



Total Expenses: \$361,784



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Living Systems gratefully acknowledges that our organization operates on the unceded and traditional territories of the Coast Salish people who have cared for these lands and waters for time immemorial. We recognize this acknowledgment is a small part of the bigger ongoing work to foster reconciliation.

As an organization which promotes mental health and wellbeing, we are aware that historic and ongoing overt and systemic racism have impacted the mental health of Indigenous peoples, and we condemn and denounce racism, oppression, and genocidal policies in every form. We also celebrate and acknowledge the dignity, worth, and value of all people. We are immensely grateful for the Indigenous people who have chosen to work with us. We are committed to building a meaningful relationship with Coast Salish peoples based on mutual respect, trust, and understanding as we strive towards creating a better future together.

In British Columbia where Living Systems operates, land acknowledgements are increasingly offered in public life to recognize the traditional territory of the Indigenous peoples who called the land home before the arrival of settlers/colonization. We humbly follow the Indigenous practice of recognizing and honoring the relationship of people to space and place. Through acknowledging whose land, we are on, we remind ourselves of the relationships that need repair and our ongoing commitment to reconciliation.

OUR LOCATIONS

North Vancouver:

#133 – 901 3rd Street West, North Vancouver

Downtown Vancouver:

915 – 1125 Howe Street, Vancouver

Burnaby:

200-5050 Kingsway Ave, Burnaby

Burnaby:

201-3701 Hastings Street, Burnaby

CONTACT US



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